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ABSTRACT

Based on extensive fieldwork and documentary analysis undertaken during the course of the documentation and evaluation of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement's (OERI) Educational Partnerships Program (EPP), two hypotheses are offered, based on interactionist theory, to explain the differences between school-to-work partnerships and other educational partnerships. The hypotheses are: (1) perceptions of roles either facilitate or impede the early development and later institutionalization of the partnerships, depending on how accurately each institution's expectations fit the partner institution(s) norms; and (2) successful early implementation and institutionalization are more likely to occur when perceptions of relative social status and social relationships among key partner organizations are structurally defined rather than defined in terms of one or more organizations "parenting" other partners. Pluralist structures were more likely to establish coalitions, and paternalist structures were more likely to establish primary partner/limited partner relationships. Regarding support, pluralists tended to view organizational status as equal, and paternalists were more likely to view expertise as a sole-source commodity enhancing the status of one organization over another. Pluralism produced more productive relationships in business-education partnerships, in part, because horizontal paths of communication allowed better understandings of role-appropriate distributions of tasks. Seven tables and one figure are included. Contains 15 references. (LMI)

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BUSINESS-EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS: THE IMPACT OF ROLE-APPROPRIATENESS

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is based on extensive fieldwork and documentary analysis undertaken during the course of the Documentation and Evaluation of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement's (OERI's) Educational Partnerships Program (EPP). Cross-site analysis of documents, formal and informal observations, and conversations with partnership participants also revealed some interesting differences between the school-to-work transition projects and other types of educational partnerships funded by OERI. The partnerships were formed among schools and some set of the following: businesses, colleges and universities, community groups, government agencies, hospitals, law enforcement agencies, religious organizations, and social service organizations. However, most of the nonschool partners were businesses, or the business (job training) aspects of other aforementioned institutions. The following explores two related hypotheses in order to suggest possible explanations for some of the differences distinguishing school-to-work from other educational partnerships. This paper is not proffered as proof of the hypotheses; rather, it is intended as speculative discussion.

The *Documentation and Evaluation of the Educational Partnerships Program: Year 2 Report* (Tushnet, Bodinger-deUriarte, van Broekhuizen, Manuel, Danzberger, & Clark, 1993) contains the evaluation findings in terms of a series of relationships among partnership structure, activities, outcomes, and degree of institutionalization.[1] They serve as the basis for this paper, but will not be repeated here. This paper presents an interactionist perspective (Cooley, 1909; Mead, 1934; Manis & Meltzer, 1967) on educational partnerships by viewing the data and findings through a different lens.[2] The interactionist hypotheses rest on two factors: (a) that expectations and patterns of behavior influencing partnership success derive, in part, from roles imbedded in the norms of the originating institutions; that is, the private sector/nonprofit institutions and the schools; and (b) attached to these roles are perceptions about relative status and anticipated social relationships among institutions.

The first hypothesis is that such perceptions either facilitate or impede the early development and later institutionalization of the partnerships, depending on how accurately the expectations of each institution fit the norms of the partner institution(s). Elsewhere the importance of shared understandings of project goals and outcomes is discussed. Here, however, the issue is

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[1] This paper uses some excerpts from the *Year 2 Report* that also may appear in papers by colleagues on the project.

[2] A sociological approach to social psychology emphasizing the action and reaction of groups to one another wherein the expectations imbedded in social norms and roles have the power to influence group behavior and patterns of interaction, beyond individual and single-group goals.

deeper and cuts across what projects propose to do. The first hypothesis concerns partner perceptions of the nature of the organizational relationships they are forming with one another, and the consequent expectations around partnership decisionmaking and the distribution of partnership responsibilities, regardless of specific goals. Thus, even where participants hold similar views of project goals and outcomes, how they attempt to implement those goals and achieve those outcomes is affected by how participants from very different organizations regard one another as representatives of these organizations.

The second hypothesis is that successful early implementation and institutionalization are more likely to occur where perceptions of relative social status and the social relationship among key partner organizations are structurally defined rather than defined in terms of one or more organizations "parenting" other partners. That is, implementation and institutionalization are enhanced where partnerships among schools and businesses, for example, involve a division of responsibility based on perceived distribution of knowledge and ability pertaining to specific roles in each organization. The counter example is that implementation and institutionalization are impeded where decisionmaking roles and perceived expertise are seen as the primary dominion of one partner or set of partners so that business/community partners may feel it is appropriate to push for particular school-based innovations, much as parents feel it is appropriate to make decisions for children.

The paper is organized as follows. The introductory section includes an overview of the EPP, including brief descriptions of partnership types. It also discusses the study's methodology. The second section in this paper includes findings from the study reconfigured to highlight the patterns of difference between school-to-work partnerships and other types of partnerships. The third section contains the hypothetical discussion. The findings are presented through the interactionist lens and the impact of role-appropriateness and explores the possible effects of status and relationship assumptions on the relative success of school-to-work transition partnership projects as compared with other types of educational partnerships. These are discussed in terms of pluralist structure and a paternalistic social stratification.

The pluralist view recognizes that "people do not share the same world of meaning," and deems this an acceptable feature of social reality (Perdue, 1986, p.169). The pluralist ideal is a *balance of power*, in a heterogeneous setting earmarked by a variety of interests. The pluralist view is manifested in the structurally based partnerships. The paternalist model, by contrast recognizes one "world of meanings" as primary or wiser or more developed than another. The paternalist view is manifested in stratified relationships.

The Educational Partnerships Program

The U. S. Congress enacted the Educational Partnerships Act of 1988 to stimulate the creation of partnerships between educational institutions and the private and nonprofit sectors of the community. These partnerships, part of the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988, were intended to foster projects through which private and nonprofit community organizations and educational institutions would jointly: (a) raise career awareness of secondary and postsecondary students and provide exposure to the world of work; (b) expand learning and experiential opportunities for educationally disadvantaged and gifted students; and (c) work on school improvement. Each partnership was to be evaluated by a local project evaluator. In addition, a national study was undertaken by the Southwest Regional Laboratory (SWRL) and the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL). Local project-specific evaluators were primarily concerned with assessing project goal attainment. The national study, however, was concerned not only with goal attainment across projects, but with the broader issues of impact on education, participating organizations, and community sentiment. As part of this ongoing effort, study teams identify promising practices, evaluate the extent to which new social relationships and improved interorganizational understandings are established, and examine whether partnerships (and the activities they sponsor) can be a force to renew education and encourage community support for education. This paper is based on the first two years of research on partnerships and the evaluation of the EPP.

The EPP and the national study are administered by the Educational Networks Division, Programs for the Improvement of Practice, OERI, U.S. Department of Education. SWRL and IEL conducted data collection and analysis on all 29 OERI-funded partnership projects through four staggered cycles of funding. Most were funded for three to four years. Although information was collected for 29 partnerships, to ensure that implementation comparisons are not confounded by the short life of nascent projects, only 20 of the earlier cycle projects are included in the following analyses[3]. Further, this demarcation was made as institutionalization comparisons would be even more inappropriate because time in existence, rather than roles and structures, would still be the greatest predictor of the stage of instiutionalization among the most recently funded projects.

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[3] Twenty-two partnership projects were funded in the early cyles; however, 1 dropped out of the project and 1 was delayed for a full year while replacing key personnel. These two projects were not indicative of typical start-up difficulties and were left out so as not to obscure the picture.

Summary of Project Types

The 20 partnership projects discussed in this paper differ from one another in structure, objectives, and local evaluation designs. They include a variety of configurations of business, industry, cultural institutions, health and human service agencies, institutions of higher education, state education agencies, and public elementary and secondary schools. Partnerships include projects designed to: (a) facilitate the transition from school to work; (b) improve instruction in mathematics and science; (c) provide opportunities for gifted students, those at risk of school failure, and noncollege-bound students; and (d) stimulate systemic reform. For the purposes of this paper, findings will generally be presented in terms of comparisons between the 8 school-to-work transition projects and the 12 remaining projects.[4]

School-to-Work Projects

School-to-work transition defines the primary focus of eight (40%) of the projects analyzed in this paper. All eight school-to-work projects involved providing participating students with work-site experiences such as job shadows or paid and unpaid internships of varying duration. Otherwise, projects differed significantly. For example, in an attempt to influence teaching practice, one project includes paid private sector summer internships for high school teachers in relevant content areas. The goal is to increase work-application relevance in science and math instruction. Some projects provide career awareness speakers or events. Others have job shadowing or internship experiences that include formal counseling or mentoring components to delineate training and educational needs for career paths associated with the job experience. Still other projects have more formal structures for creating career paths such as "tech-prep" or "2+2" programs articulating high school and postsecondary work. Among these are sponsored "career academies"–schools-within-schools that structure the major portion of student experience around requirements for success in a particular career field. In all of these efforts, however, one commonality is the need for very concrete interaction between two institutional cultures, one belonging to the world of school and the other to the world of work.

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[4] Two of these projects include work-to-school components, but have significant additional systemic goals and are, thus, included under the systemic change category (part of the 12 "others") rather than the school-to-work category in the analyses in this paper. Conversely, one project initially considered as math-science is included in the school-to-work analysis because the focus is moving students into the math or science workplace through internships, career awareness events, etc. Further, the project administration has changed focus and is including numerous nonmath and nonscience internship placements.

Other Projects

The 12 (60%) other projects included in the analysis fall into the following three categories. There are those primarily organized to serve particular target groups, those that involve math-science enrichment, and those attempting to implement systemic change affecting education at the school, district, or state level. As with the school-to-work projects, wide variations are present within categories.

Target Groups. While all partnerships identified a population of youths to serve, and some of these populations were broad and others more narrow, the target group was central to the effort in particular partnerships. In other words, the target group, whether consisting of dropouts, noncollege-bound students, students at risk for failure, or gifted students, was the primary focus, rather than the type of reform or experience to be provided. So whereas some project designers said, for example, "Let's improve math and science," then defined the target group or tailored aspects to various target groups, other project designers said, for example, "Let's recover students who have dropped out," then defined the content of the project. Three (15%) of the early cycle projects focus primarily on gifted or at-risk students or on dropouts. The curriculum content varies but includes career opportunities, math-science opportunities, and full-day alternative education programs.

Math/Science. Three (15%) math/science projects were included in the early funding cycles. Two of these involve key curriculum components and focus on efforts to improve instruction and learning. The remaining project has a science awareness focus and involves science professionals visiting classrooms.

Systemic Change. Of the 20 projects, 6 (30%) are attempting to bring about systemic changes through the educational partnership. In these projects, the specific content area addressed or client group served is less important than efforts to change governance, relationships, and the nature of curriculum and instruction. Although they include math, science, career education, and other curriculum areas, curriculum is used to change how students and teachers relate to one another and to encourage "active learning" on the part of students. Further, community experiences for students and teachers are designed to change how community members and school people relate to one another and to allow for mutual influence. For example, they may involve integrating social services into the school. Finally, decisionmaking processes are changed, generally to include more individuals from both within the schools and the community.

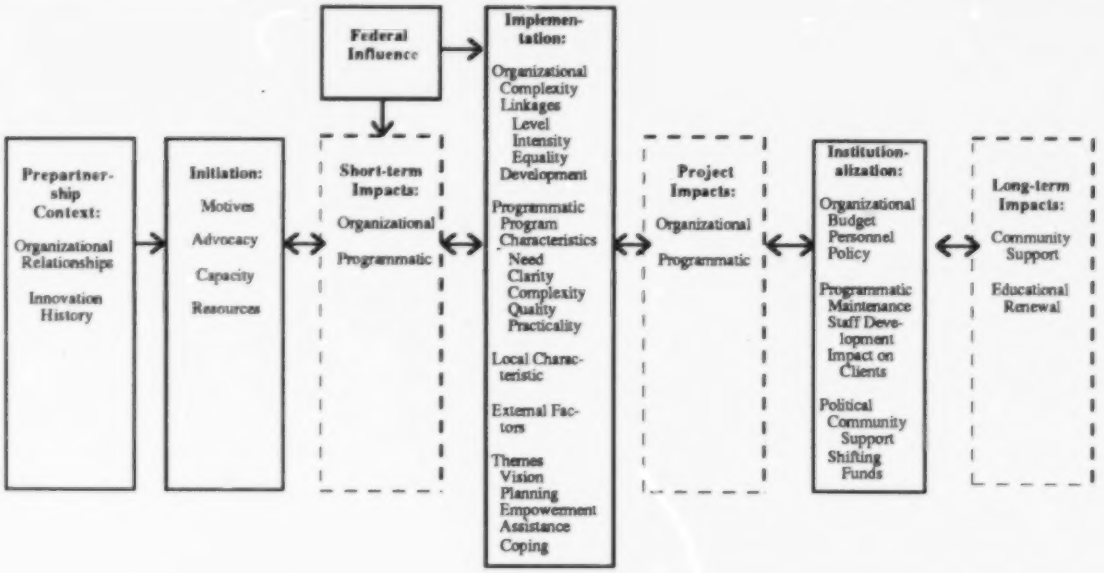
Study Design and Methodology

The evaluation of the EPP projects uses a conceptual framework drawn largely from the research on innovation and change. From this perspective, the partnerships are an innovation with two distinct aspects. First, the partnerships are an innovation in *organizational arrangements*. Second, the partnerships develop and implement *programmatic innovations*. The two perspectives are important in analyzing the relationships among partnership structure, activities, implementation, and impact. This analytic dyad also facilitates an exploration of the partnership through the interactionist lens. First, perceptions of relative social status and anticipated social relationships are accessible in the analysis of interorganizational arrangements. Second, the "fit" between established organizational roles and new partnership roles is accessible in the analysis of project activities as programmatic innovations.

The conceptual framework (see Figure 1) is particularly appropriate because educational partnerships began as a means to improving education. Further, the argument is that school people require the political support, resources, and expertise that partnerships bring to public education to make the necessary changes (Hood, 1991). Looking at the projects funded by the EPP as innovative interorganizational arrangements facilitates understanding of the ways in which businesses and community-based organizations can support school reform.

The programmatic perspective is equally important. Educational partnerships range from those that provide targeted support for at-risk students, opportunities for teacher summer employment, and materials and equipment to schools that have been "adopted" to those that aim at "systemic" reform. The EPP has provided funding to projects that exhibit the full range of programmatic characteristics. Consequently, the framework's concern with the relationship between the interorganizational innovation and the program innovation is appropriate to the study.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework was designed to incorporate the view that educational partnerships develop over time. Just as change in educational programs is a process, so is change in the relationship between and among organizations. This includes changes in organizational norms and roles as well as changes in interorganizational expectations and relative status attribution. A developmental perspective signals the need to look at changes over time on the organizational dimension, as well as on the programmatic level. The developmental perspective is beyond the scope of the discussion presented in this paper. However, if the hypotheses hold, then it would follow that those partnerships experiencing successful implementation and institutionalization following initial difficulties might have experienced adjustments in organizational norms, roles, and/or interorganizational expectations that enabled increased success in working relationships among partners or led to the reframing of project goals.

The study employs data triangulation; that is, collecting information from multiple sources using multiple methods. Study teams collected descriptions of activities from project-generated documents and from interviews with project staff, staff from participating institutions, and the recipients of services. Activities and participant interactions also were documented through formal on-site observations. Multiple perspectives on partnership practices, activities, and structures allowed triangulation of participant interpretation of meanings. This allowed discrepancies in

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interorganizational expectations and organizational norms to be identified. Partnerships represent social relationships among role incumbents from differing organizational cultures. As a result, participants sometimes held expectations appropriate to their own organizational culture, but not shared by the participants from partnering institutions. Or, conversely, participants held inappropriate expectations based on an erroneous view of the other's organizational culture. One relatively simple example was provided by a school principal. One of the business partner participants wanted to reduce the number of planning meetings during project initiation and suggested that, as people were hard to reach by phone, some planning be conducted via fax or e-mail, reflecting a norm in his culture. The school principal informed the business partner that the school had neither the hardware (fax or modem) nor the technology to support it (phone lines, computer net). Time and expectations about communication paths had to be adjusted.

Information was collected on site by two-persons teams that visited for three days and was synthesized by the study team following its visit. Team members reread interview transcripts, notes from observations, and project documents, coding information according to the conceptual framework. They prepared an interpretive summary of their findings, that served two purpose: First, it provided a concise statement of the progress and problems of a particular funded partnership, and contained tentative analyses of its status and hypotheses about relationships among its structure, activities, and success. Second, it focused future data collection efforts through those hypotheses.

In a staff meeting, site visitors reviewed the interpretive summaries to develop what Yin (1989) calls "causal arguments" both within and across cases. Frequently, discussions of relationships among activities or structures led us to reexamine the original data, including project documents and interview transcripts. The causal arguments were used to identify the existence of phenomena in more than one case under predictable conditions.

The analytic meetings followed procedures recommended by Miles and Huberman (1984, 1994). They note that qualitative data analysis involves "three concurrent flows of activities" (p. 21). The first flow is data reduction, "the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming" the information from field notes and documents. This involves the coding and interpretive summaries. In some cases, it was useful to quantify phenomena. For example, we were interested in the number of partnerships with particular types of structures and formal mechanisms for preparing participants to carry out partnership activities.

The second set of activities involved developing "displays" that include matrices, networks, and narrative text. In the analysis, we developed displays for each project based on the conceptual

framework. We then built a cross-case analysis by comparing and contrasting the displays. As a result, we identified the patterns and relationships that form the basis of this report.

The final activities recommended by Miles and Huberman (1984) are drawing conclusions and verifying them. The displays themselves are tentative "conclusions" about relationships. They are, in fact, causal arguments. At this stage, we have verified the relationships within the projects, against the literature, and across projects.

FINDINGS

This section highlights findings from the Documentation and Evaluation of the Educational Partnerships Program that illuminate the relative success of school-to-work transition partnerships and relate to the possible impact of role-appropriateness on that success. More complete descriptions of study findings can be found in *Documentation and Evaluation of the Educational Partnerships Program: Year 2 Report.* Only those findings relevant to the comparisons of the school-to-work partnerships with the remaining body of partnerships are presented here.[5] Some of the possible explanations for the following findings will be explored in the hypothetical section of this paper.

The most striking differences between the school-to-work projects and others are the early successes in achieving full implementation, and the relative success institutionalizing activities, partner relationships, and the structure of the partnership. In addition, important differences are evident in the type of partnership structure established, the clarity of strategic roles, and the nature of resources provided to those carrying out partnership activities. Findings from the two-year study indicated that each of these factors was important for implementation.

Implementation and Institutionalization Comparisons

Some partnerships were more successful than others. Some, for example, were able to implement plans and activities fully, and achieve identified objectives, while others were not. Some were able to institutionalize and maintain features of the partnership without continuing to receive federal funds. This happened on a variety of levels. In some cases, some or all of the new activities were institutionalized, but not the relationships with partners. Others were able to institutionalize activities and relationships but were unable to wed these to an established or newly developed

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[5] Comparisons generally take the form of relative percentages of projects manifesting the project feature or component in question. Important differences are defined as those representing at least a difference of 10 percentage points between the school-to-work partnerships and the other partnerships.

administrative structure or governance system. Thus institutionalization was assessed for all three: *activities, partners, and structure. Even so, some projects did not institutionalize* at any level and seemed unlikely to continue functioning once federal funding ceased. It may be argued that some of the partnerships served best as temporary projects with an end date. Institutionalization is assessed for all of the projects; however, as all stated it as a goal and held expectations about continuing the activities beyond the federally supported period.

As implementation precedes institutionalization, those findings are presented first (see Table 1). It should be noted, however, that early full implementation is not predictive of later institutionalization. Some of the projects that come into full implementation over a longer period were able to institutionalize successfully at a later stage.

Table 1
Implementation

	School-to-work projects	Other projects
Fully Implemented	88%	42%

School-to-work projects achieved full implementation much more readily than other types of projects. The institutionalization comparison is not as clear-cut but important differences remain (see Tables 2-4).

Cross-project analysis of institutionalization originally assessed projects according to a five-point scale of institutionalization, ranging from no institutionalization to full institutionalization. This yields more detail than is necessary for the sake of comparisons made here. Rather, comparisons begin with midlevel institutionalization. Projects with midlevel institutionalization of activities are defined as those with one third to two thirds of planned activities operating and able to continue beyond the end of OERI support. Those with high to full institutionalization of activities have over two thirds of their activities in this condition. Assessment of the institutionalization of partners follows the same pattern. Only those partners actively participating in partnership activities or governance were assessed in the institutionalization count. Partners whose only role was financial were excluded from the assessment of partner relationships. Financially involved partners were discussed in the original report in terms of resources and community support for the project. The structure, that is, the governing arm, or overall administering office of the partnership, was assessed only in terms of overall

institutionalization. These structures took a variety of forms, be it as staffed offices or as regularly meeting, interorganizational round tables, boards of directors, or networks of task-oriented committees–some of which obtained 501c3 status. Given the variety, partnership structures are defined as the organizing mechanisms through which decisions are enacted and resources allocated for the partnership. A project's partnership structure was not considered to be institutionalized unless it could remain fully operational after OERI funding ceased.

Table 2
Institutionalization of Activities

	School-to-work projects	Other projects
Activities mid-institutionalization	63%	17%
Activities high-full institutionalization	37%	33%
Mid/full activities total	100%	50%

Although roughly the same proportion of projects implemented and later institutionalized most or all of their activities (33-37%), most types of projects found institutionalizing activities something of an all-or-nothing proposition. That is, activities may be implemented as long as there is external funding, but the move to create permanent changes in what people do is generally more problematic. Fully half of the nonschool-to-work projects failed to institutionalize even one third of their activities. However, in the school-to-work transition projects, this is not the case. Every school-to-work project experienced at least moderate success in institutionalizing project activities. This is true even among the largest and most ambitious school-to-work projects including curriculum reform and articulation agreements. Findings concerning the institutionalization of relationships with partners are similar (see Table 3).

Table 3
Institutionalization of the Partner Relationship

	School-to-work projects	Other projects
Partners' mid-institutionalization	50%	42%
Partners' high-full institutionalization	50%	8%
Mid/full partners total	100%	50%

Roughly half of each project type were able to establish stable, ongoing relationships among one third to two thirds of their partners. Of the nonschool-to-work projects, only one (a systemic change project with a large school-to-work component) was able to institutionalize more than two thirds of its partner relationships. None were able to fully institutionalize their partners. The reality is quite different for the school-to-work projects. Every school-to-work project was able to achieve at least moderate levels of institutionalization among partners, with fully half of the projects institutionalizing over two thirds or all of their active partner relationships.

The governance or administration of the partnership, that is the organizational structure, may be the most difficult to institutionalize. Although some partnerships may not need the structure once all activities and relationships are in place, interviews with project directors and staff indicated that most projects intended to institutionalize some form of partnership structure. However, relatively few of the 20 early cycle projects successfully institutionalized their partnership structures (see Table 4). Several project directors mentioned that while community members might see particular activities as valuable and wish to support them, governing and administrative committees or councils or project offices were less visible and had a harder time garnering community support.

Table 4
Institutionalization of the Partnership Structure

	School-to-work projects	Other projects
Structure Institutionalized	38%	17%

More than twice the proportion of school-to-work projects, as compared to the group of other projects, institutionalized the administrative, organizational, or governance structure of the partnership. This is true in cases where some form of the project existed prior to federal funding as well as in cases where the partnership represented a completely new innovation. As time goes on, of course, more projects of other types may achieve high or full institutionalization levels in any of the areas discussed. However, the comparisons are telling for early institutionalization even if other types of projects become well established over the long run.

Types of Partnership Structures

Review and analysis of the various projects following the first year of the study yielded the following typology of partnership structures: (a) primary partner/limited partner, (b) coalition, and (c) collaboration. Each structural type is described below. This is not a developmental typology. That is, one structural arrangement is not judged to be superior to another. Nor are projects expected to shift from one type of structure to a second and then a third akin to moving along a continuum.

The *primary partner/limited partner* type of partnership structure is conceptually similar to a consultant relationship where one organization will contract with outside experts to provide services. The lead organization is distinguished by its role as the coordinator of partnership activities. The language is drawn from business in which "limited partnerships" are a common phenomena.

The *coalition* type of partnership structure involves a division of labor among organizations. Each partner carries out particular activities and decides what to do within a broad framework articulated by the partnership as a whole. Partners are equal, but bring different interests and skills to the arrangement. The language, of course, comes from the realm of politics in which shifting coalitions mark the nature of a pluralistic democracy.

The *collaboration* type of partnership structure also involves a division of labor among equal partners; however, decisionmaking is continuous and shared among partners. Each partner is empowered to participate in all decisions. The language is drawn from organizational theory.

The structure of the partnership is related to early implementation success. Only one of the fully implemented partnership projects has a primary partner/limited partner structure. Among the early fully implemented projects, collaborations were most often represented. Projects that were slower to achieve full implementation, but later achieved full institutionalization, are almost equally

represented among coalitions and collaborations. In addition, two of these are primary partner/ limited partner projects. Comparisons between school-to-work and other projects reveal that school-to-work projects are significantly less likely to take the form of primary partner/limited partner arrangements and significantly more likely to take the form of collaborations (see Table 5).

Table 5
Partnership Structure Types

	School-to-work projects	Other projects
Primary/limited partnership	38%	58%
Coalition partnerships	25%	33%
Collaboration partnerships	38%	17%

It should also be noted that two of the three primary partner/limited partner school-to-work projects were institutionalized while none of the other projects adopting this structure achieved either full implementation or institutionalization.

Role Clarity

Partnerships are implemented through the ways participants enact roles as well as through the relationships among partnership roles. Roles and relationships among roles can be examined at the level of project planning and at the level of execution (activity). The same participants may inhabit roles at both levels or some may be planners and others actors. Four issues of role clarity thus emerge with implications for the successful early implementation of projects. These are: (a) clarity of roles at the planning level, (b) clarity of the relationship among planning roles for the various participants, (c) clarity of roles at the activity level, and (d) clarity of the relationship among activity roles for the various participants.

Clear roles might well be a prerequisite for implementation. Participants in fully implemented projects clearly understood both their planning and their activity roles. In all but one of the fully implemented projects, participants also had a clear understanding of the relationship between their own activities and the partnership activities of others, that is, the relationship among activity roles. There were no fully implemented projects in which both activity roles and the relationships among activity roles were unclear; the same is true at the planning level. Thus, at the minimum,

responsibility for *and* they need to have either a shared understanding of how activity roles and responsibilities are distributed and who is responsible for each aspect of the activity, *or* they need to know how their roles interact with others within the partnership planning effort. Having clear roles and relationships at both planning and activity levels is strongly linked to implementation.

Comparisons between school-to-work partnerships and other types of partnerships show that, although most project participants understand the specific tasks and activities they are to carry out, those in school-to-work partnerships are much more likely to understand the distribution and relationship of activity roles to one another (see Table 6). That is, they are more often informed about what their partners are accomplishing–what other tasks are included among the project activities and who is responsible for each. School-to-work partnership participants are also more likely to have a clear understanding of their roles in the planning process.

The fact that most school-to-work transition project participants have a clear understanding of the relationships among activities as well as their own roles in carrying out the work of the project may explain why these projects also manifest greater rates of resource support at the activity level.

Table 6
Role and Role Relationship Clarity

	School-to-work projects	Other projects
Activity Role Clarity	88%	83%
Relationship among Activity Roles	88%	75%
Planning Role Clarity	75%	58%

Activity Level Resources

Projects concerned with establishing innovative activities provided resources to those charged with carrying out partnership tasks. Projects offered a variety of resources in differing combinations. Two resources, technical assistance/content support and talent/experience matching, have the most importance for implementation as well as comparison purposes and are defined below.

Technical assistance/content support refers to the provision of significant technical or content-oriented help to those carrying out project tasks. Support may take the form of materials, such as training manuals; access to expertise within the partnership, such as coordinators; access to outside expertise, such as paid consultants; or ongoing support mechanisms, such as professional networks. In many of the school-to-work transition projects, training manuals as well as mentoring-counseling components are included to support the activities. For example, one project with a job-shadow component has high school counselors recruit student participants, ensure job shadow schedules are minimally disruptive in view of school events, and organize student departures in compliance with school regulations. Ongoing assistance is provided to high school counselors by project staff who provide additional job-shadow counseling to the students and follow-up on student experiences; feedback is shared with the high school counselors who maintain primary roles in providing career and educational guidance to the students.

Talent/experience matching refers to the strategy of matching partnership task requirements to personnel already capable of carrying out such tasks. This may take place in two ways. First, project organizers may act as talent scouts and recruit new staff specifically for particular project roles. Second, project planning may have been influenced, in part, by what committed participants already were capable of doing. This is contrasted to partnerships that rely heavily on existing staff learning new skills, undertaking unfamiliar tasks, and redefining or significantly expanding prior roles.

Technical assistance or content support was found to be the resource with greatest impact on implementation. In fact, if one were to predict full implementation based on the provision of such assistance alone, one would be correct 82% of the time. Most of the projects provided this resource for those carrying out some or all of the project activities. The combination of resources proved to be even more important with regard to full implementation than individual resources. The combination of talent/experience match with technical assistance/content support was the most prevalent among the fully implemented projects.

As shown in Table 7, most *non* work-to-school projects provide activity-level technical assistance or content support, but fewer than half provide both this resource *and* the talent or experience match. All school-to-work projects, however, provide this powerful resource combination.

Table 7
Resources Provided to Activity-Level Participants

	School-to-work projects	Other projects
Technical Assistance/Content Support	100%	83%
Talent/Experience Matching	100%	58%
Both Assistance and Matching	100%	42%

An exploration of possible reasons for differences among school-to-work transition and other partnership projects follows.

THE INTERACTIONIST LENS

The comparisons of school-to-work transition partnership projects with other EPP projects revealed important differences along several dimensions relevant to implementation and later institutionalization. These involve the type of partnership structure adopted, the clarity of partnership roles and relationships, and the provision of resources. Findings indicate that school-to-work partnerships are more likely to become fully implemented at an early point in the funding cycle and also are more likely to institutionalize more activities, relationships, and structures than are partnerships with other programmatic foci. The issues reach beyond the surface data to the question of what interactive dynamics contribute to the differences between school-to-work and *non* school-to-work partnerships. This is a question rooted in interactionism and includes consideration of the perspectives that underpin actions as potentially important to how groups work together. The following explores how pluralist perspectives more commonly found in the school-to-work projects, in contrast with hierarchical or stratified perspectives, may have an impact on the dynamics of partner interaction.

This section of the paper poses some speculations as to what those dynamics might be, as seen through the lens of symbolic interaction theory:

- The expectations and patterns of behavior that influence partnership success derive, in part, from roles imbedded in the norms of the originating institutions (i.e., the businesses and the schools).

- Attached to these roles are perceptions about relative status and anticipated social relationships among institutions.

- Such perceptions either facilitate or impede the early development and later institutionalization of the partnerships, depending on how accurately the expectations of each institution fit the norms of the partner institution(s).

Examples are drawn from five projects to illustrate these dynamics. Two are school-to-work transition projects, two are math-science projects, and one is a systemic change project. These are chosen because they illustrate a particular issue relevant to the discussion, and not because they are assessed as making more or less valuable contributions to local educational reform efforts.

The Impact of Role-Appropriateness

The EPP projects include partnerships that require participants to develop substantively different areas of knowledge and ability as well as those that require new arrangements and applications of existing knowledge and ability. The former group has greater challenges in integrating new requirements into established organizational norms and patterns of behavior than does the latter group. However, both deal with changing how participants enact particular roles and also may entail role incumbents renegotiating expectations held by others, and redefining the duties seen as role-related (Linton, 1936; Theodorson & Theodorson, 1986). Both negotiating processes are facilitated when the partnership structure encourages ongoing communication among participants, enabling a clear understanding of one anothers roles and the attached resource needs.

Role Appropriateness and Partnership Structure

Strong organizing structures, particularly in the form of collaboratives, seem to have been a critical factor in supporting full implementation. They provided arenas for discussing differences in interpretations of intention, disappointments in partners' performance, changing expectations, and needs for greater support for those making program changes. This supports the view that "implementation is an ongoing construction of shared reality among group members through their interaction with one another within the program" (Fullan 1991, p. 132). The primary partner/limited partner structures are the least likely to provide mechanisms for this kind of exchange or have been established by partners who acknowledge this interactive need.

School-to-work transitions are more likely to be organized as collaboratives than are other types of projects. This may be because participating work organizations and participating school organizations are engaged in a division of labor in which each perceives the other to be a source of consultancy in cross-organizational activities, while retaining relevant expertise in the organization of origin. Thus, partnership duties fit into established expectations and self-concepts. For

example, one school-to-work project has a job mentoring component where mentors are required to go through two trainings. One is provided by the educational institution and trains mentors on realities of working with high school aged students, educational outcomes needed to justify student participation, and who to contact if problems arise. Mentors then receive a second training from the personnel office at the work site on appropriate work-site experiences to share with students, appropriate job-readiness content to communicate, and career path information to disseminate. In neither case is one organization intruding into the other's realm of expertise, or taking on the perceived duties of the partnering organization.

A contrasting example is provided by one primary partner/limited partner math-science project that operates from the view that expertise resides in the applied work realm and is largely absent from the educational institutions with which it plans to develop partnerships. Volunteer science and math professionals were recruited to provide classroom demonstrations and guest lectures. This took place without consulting teachers as to age-appropriate materials, curricular relevance, and so forth. Consequently, although all activities are technically implemented, the service is rarely used. Efforts to increase use of the classroom science and math volunteers did not include discussions with teachers as to the potential utility of the project or the perceived reasons for its current underuse. Thus, concerns about how classroom volunteers may or may not fit the roles and responsibilities associated with delivery of instruction at an elementary school site do not get surfaced. Site visit interviews with teachers revealed that they saw this as an important issue.

The point is not simply which partnership structure is best, however. Role-appropriateness may be seen as an important intervening dynamic. For example, although school-to-work projects were less likely to take the form of primary partner/limited partner arrangements than other projects, if they *did* adopt this structure, they still achieved full early implementation in two out of three cases[6]. In such instances, it is because the division of labor and role-appropriate tasks are undertaken, but in a narrow frame and formalized contractual relationship.

Clarity of Roles and Relations as a Function of Role Appropriateness

Under the ideal conditions for project implementation, expectations are appropriate and mutually understood. People know how to strategize together, initiate new activities, or how to get things accomplished. Implementation is a complex social process of putting in place changes in policy

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[6]The most recently funded projects are primarily systemic change projects that do not tend toward the primary partner/limited partner configuration. It is too soon to include these in the institutionalization comparisons, but they might shift some of the findings and provide greater information about the relative importance of the partnership structure as a factor of later institutionalization.

and/or practice that affect and are affected by the organizational features and programmatic activities of the partnerships. Implementation was achieved when people in charge of carrying out program activities knew what to do, how to do it, and were provided with the resources to maintain their understanding throughout the implementation process. Clearly, the more closely the "what" and the "how" of partnership activities is analogous to or integrated with the what and the how of established roles, the stronger the knowledge base from which to act. This is not to say that reform should not include efforts to substantively change roles and types of knowledge required of participants. However, implementation should be expected to be a slower process, and commensurate increases in the nature and duration of resources should be provided to those undertaking fundamentally different tasks.

Several partnerships were designed to include complex new undertakings for participants without providing much substantive support. Such conditions result in inappropriate role demands on participants and lead to frustration and role strain (Theodorson & Theodorson, 1969). For example, one district wide systemic reform project was designed to be carried out within the context of site-based management. This required that teachers and principals substantially change the way they interacted and engaged in decisionmaking and sharing responsibility. Late into the first year of the project, the director acknowledged that although meetings took place in which appropriate representatives attended, power relations and the actual decisionmaking processes remained unchanged. The project director also stated that no one had been provided with training in site-based management. Thus, new roles were inappropriately laid over older, conflicting roles without any mechanism for redefining or integrating differing role demands. Teachers were unclear about possible employee-employer consequences and principals were unconvinced as to the appropriate compromises to make and weight to give teacher input.

Similarly confused expectations and disjunctions between project role requirements and ongoing role requirements may help explain why activities are an all-or-nothing proposition for many partnerships. Participants in school-to-work transition projects may undertake new activities, but these seldom involve fundamental changes in their roles. Thus, school-to-work partnerships institutionalize at *least* one third of their activities in all cases.

Lack of role clarity also may result from the absence of a central, motivating concern orienting the participants and focusing project goals. Most EPP projects were initiated to address particular problems in the locality served, although there were some disagreements among partners about what the crucial problems were and how best to address them. Of the 20 projects of interest, most were initiated to solve problems. However, 4 projects were entered into opportunistically, mainly to gain access to federal funds. All 4 experienced early implementation problems. None of

the 8 school-to-work projects is among the opportunistic group. Common commitment to serving a perceived need also may provide an integrative mechanism across organizations.

Role clarity is best thought of as an indicator of appropriate preparation and/or support for implementation. It is a prerequisite but needs implementation strategies that continually assist in its development. Role clarity at the beginning of a project and role clarity during implementation are fundamentally different. To understand what is expected of you and what your specific tasks are is quite different from knowing how to carry out such tasks during the unfolding of new activities. Ongoing role clarity at the activity level was accomplished by: (a) matching people to program activities or (b) providing technical assistance and/or content support at the activity level.

Resource Provision and Role-Appropriateness

Perhaps the most striking finding is that every school-to-work transition project provided activity-level participants with both resources most significant in implementation: (a) talent/ability matching, and (b) technical assistance/content support. One explanation is that access to these resources was a simpler matter in the school-to-work transition projects.

Many school-to-work projects are designed around an organizationally based division of labor. In addition, organizational norms often include outreach or recruitment roles that may be meshed with project role needs without affecting established norms. For example, one school-to-work transition project is designed to provide job shadows as well as career path information and relevant educational shadows. One of the partners is a community college recruitment officer charged with increasing enrollment and informing potential students about the relevance of the college's educational programs for job attainment. He has an active role in arranging and providing the educational shadows linked to the job shadow experiences of participating students. He is able to integrate this role into the established role and to provide expertise matched to the task. Further, he is a source of ongoing technical assistance to the counselors making the job shadow assignments. Thus, role-appropriateness may explain the relative ease of access to this powerful resource combination in school-to-work transition partnership projects.

The issue is more problematic when the participants acting as primary implementers of new activities are not housed in a context that provides easy access to needed resources. One example is provided by a systemic reform project with a curriculum change component. The grant writer assumed that classroom teachers would be able to understand and quickly execute curriculum reform. This was an opinion held in several projects with curriculum reform components. It is most likely to be an inappropriate expectation when teachers are being asked to redesign curriculum

to incorporate teaching practices fundamentally different form those they enact on a day-to-day basis. In such cases, teachers need ongoing access to experts experienced in curriculum design and educators familiar with the teaching practices to be implemented. Such access was not available to these teachers, although computer software personnel, also not trained in curriculum development, were on hand to aid in making the curriculum computer-based. Teachers did eventually implement some of the proposed curriculum components, but it took them one and one-half years longer than initially estimated by the project director.

Role-appropriateness plays a greater facilitative role in the absence of relevant resources. Ironically, however, where roles are most appropriate to the task, ability and support resources are likely to be available as well.

Relative Status and Anticipated Social Relationships

Beneath the structures, roles, and resources, participants also operated from one of two perspectives that have significance for implementation and interorganizational interaction. The first can be described as a form of the "social contract" based on a pluralist conception of social structures. The second can be described as a form of "paternalism" and is based on a hierarchical conception of kinship and social stratification.

Partnerships as Pluralist Structures

Pluralists perceive "a heterogeneous society representing perhaps many cultures and certainly more than a few interest groups....Thus, the idealized pluralist portrait is one of a *balance of power*, where force is checked by force, and tyranny is eliminated by means of the covenant" (Perdue, 1986 p. 169).

One of the hallmarks of pluralist partnerships is the written commitment or formalized agreement that acts as the clear covenant among organizations. It forges a structure based on the negotiated interests of different participating groups. Many of the school-to-work projects rely on written commitments that act as mechanisms for forging a pluralist partnership structure in which all interests are represented. They also are as a means of ensuring role clarity and maintaining the focus of the project activities. A relatively simple example is the job shadow activity in which written commitments naming specific dates and times are required of participating organizations and students. More complex are the articulation agreements in a 2+2 school-to-work activity. Here the secondary and postsecondary partner institutions enter into formal agreements about the nature of instruction in the secondary school and the credit-earning and career-path commitments

attached to that experience if a student later enrolls in the postsecondary school. Although not free from conflicts and "turf wars," the approach is founded in the concept of negotiation and structurally derived social relationships of comparable status.

Pluralistic and paternalistic approaches are manifested both in terms of social relations and in terms of how activities are carried out. Consider the earlier example of dual training for job-site mentors. The division of labor clearly demonstrated the pluralistic orientation of the project. While job-site mentors acknowledged the need for school staff to aid them in understanding how to develop relationships with students, and teachers acknowledged the need for job-site participants to demonstrate applied-side relevance of educational content, each was seen as the primary expert in the originating institution. This attitude expresses status equity and anticipates a social relationship based on the balance of responsibilities–the pluralist frame. The stratified perspective leads to quite different assessments of status and anticipated social relationships.

Partnerships as Stratified Kinships

The paternalistic model, by contrast, recognizes one "world of meanings" as primary or wiser or more developed than another. Theodorson and Theodorson (1969) describe paternalism as "a type of leadership in which those that are superordinate provide for the needs of the subordinates in return for loyalty and obedience" (p. 293). The superordinate also typically defines the needs of the subordinates, whether or not the subordinates concur; this is akin to a "do-it-to-them-for-their-own-good" (father knows best?) rationale.

The social contract perspective led to better cooperation between and among participating institutions than did the paternalistic perspective. It also proved more efficacious in mutually reinforcing role clarity and role expectations. Although this might seem obvious, many *non* school-site participants expressed paternalistic assessments of their roles vis-a-vis teachers, schools, or districts.

Consider the earlier example of the volunteer scientists and engineers who were recruited to provide elementary school teachers with a needed resource because "otherwise they would not teach science." The absence of teacher input, the lack of training components for the volunteers, and the absence of formal feedback mechanisms all manifest a paternalistic view in which applied professionals are superordinate and elementary school teachers are subordinate. The assumption is that these professionals hold all the expertise relevant to their own field *and* enough skill to provide occasional elementary school instruction without advice from those experienced in elementary school instruction. Paternalism also is evident in the relative status of the two social worlds in

which the world of applied science is considered to have more importance and knowledge about what is appropriate for and needed by the world of elementary education.

Not all scientists are arrogant about their value to the classroom teacher *sans* consultation however. At this year's annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, some scientists "warned that few of their colleagues understand either the constraints of the classroom or the ways of working effectively within schools to promote science" (West, 1994). According to panelists, "Most scientists are not even aware of the fundamental differences between the practice of science and science education. They are two different worlds" (West, 1994). Thus, some pluralistically oriented scientists warn their paternalistic colleagues of a potentially counterproductive perspective.

Paternalism creates inappropriate expectations concerning interorganizational social relationships based on an inflated view of the importance of one organization in relation to another. In addition, as the AAAS panelists' comments reveal, paternalism involves an imperfect understanding of the norms and established roles of potential partners, which easily translates into confusion about the relationship of roles to one another when attempting to implement project activities.

Perhaps the best example of the "do-it-to-them-for-their-own-good" attitude was evident in a math-science project in which the grant writers did not include local school personnel in the project design stage. *After the grant was awarded,* the project director attempted to coerce the target school's cooperation by implying that public opinion would not embrace a school that turned down grant money. However, the principal negotiated changes in the project before agreeing to participate. The original project designer had unwittingly included several inappropriate roles for school personnel in violation of union contracts and district policy. These were corrected through a more status-equalized set of interactions with the educational institution in question. Would-be superordinates discovered that potential subordinates were able to upgrade their status and shift interaction to a more pluralistic balance of power context.

The principal in this instance was willing to overtly resist the project and communicate changes and adjustments necessary to gain his participation. This is not always the case, however, and educators asked to take on inappropriate roles, or perform tasks inappropriate to the requirements of the organizational environment may not be so forthcoming. Projects may, instead, simply fail to become implemented.

> Teachers feel they're the last ones to be asked....You just don't get the teachers' input into these things. It always comes down from the administrators, from the politicians, from the union, from the public, whatever, but it always comes from the top down. It rarely gets from the bottom up. It's like teachers aren't respected, so why should they have their word? And you just get to the point that you really just don't care about it....Most teachers feel that they are continually being pushed in every direction, and there's no support from anywhere for them these days. Students, parents, press, high administration, government, nothing seems to be on the side of the teachers. (Cohn & Kottkamp, 1993).

Conclusion: Pluralism and Paternalism in the Interactionist Equation

When people representing two or more organizations agree to work together on a project, they do not come to the table as blank slates *only* to be filled in with project objectives. Rather, their coming together represents a complex interaction of persons and organizations. Interactionist theory addresses the dynamics of this interorganizational relationship in terms of expectations and patterns of behavior derived, in part, from roles imbedded in the norms of the originating institutions. Thus, a high school principal and a corporate personnel director sitting down to plan a school-to-work activity each bring a host of assumptions and attitudes about what is appropriate to the task. Such ideas about appropriateness include the distribution of roles and responsibilities and the form in which interaction will take place. Decisionmaking and resource allocation are among these and, with them, the definition of relative expertise and relative status in the form of an anticipated social relationship.

Assumptions and attitudes rooted in pluralism lead to very different ideas about the appropriate distribution of roles and responsibilities than do those rooted in paternalism. These differences manifest themselves in different decisionmaking structures. Thus, pluralists are more likely to establish coalitions and collaboratives and paternalists are more likely to establish primary partner/limited partner relationships. These differences also manifest themselves in different resource allocation patterns. Pluralists are more likely to view support in terms of matching a division of expertise and technical assistance to the corollary division of labor, where organizational status is somewhat equal. Paternalists, by contrast, are more likely to view expertise as a sole-source commodity enhancing the status of one organization over another in a hierarchical relationship.

Pluralism was found to promote more productive relationships in business-education partnerships, in part, because paths of communication were horizontal rather than vertical, allowing better understandings of role-appropriate distributions of tasks. In addition, more school-

to-work projects were found to function on the pluralist model and to consist of role-appropriate expectations and objectives for participants. Finally, this may explain some of the differences in implementation and institutionalization patterns among school-to-work and other projects.

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